W.56

A Measuring-Rule CONCERNING LIBERTY AND PERSECUTION,

AND

Who have been the Persecutors, and who have been the Sufferers from the beginning.

ALSO,

The Stock and Line from whence the Persecutor hath had his rise and descent, and of what stock they are that cumber Gods Earth.

CHristians should love one another, that is the Command of Christ, and is a mark by which they are known to be his Disciples. Secondly, they should love their very Enemies; and by this they differ from the *Jews* and Heathens, and all other people.

Now as for the late Act concerning the people of God called *Quakers*, there is no penalty laid upon any

man for the not breaking up of their Meetings, or not putting the Oath to them; therefore it will try and manifeſt what ſpirit men are of, and that which is in people will be made manifeſt now, becauſe the Act is left to the Executor of it, without any penalty: Which Act had it been in the dayes of the Apoſtles, would have taken hold upon Chriſt and his Apoſtles; for he had *Twelve* that often met together; and by this he might have but *three*, for if there were *five*, it had been in the tranſgreſſion; who alſo had ſeventy Diſciples more. Now I ſay, if it had been in the days of Chriſt, it would have taken hold of him and his Diſciples. Would Chriſt (and his Diſciples) the Wiſdom of God, do you think, have obeyed this Act, and not met with his Diſciples? Or if the *Jews* ſhould have made Laws to limit him but to four, do you think that Chriſt the Wiſdom of God would have obeyed it, or his Diſciples? And alſo Chriſt ſaid to his Diſciples, that they ſhould wait together at *Jeruſalem*, and not depart; and they did meet together, and you know that their meetings were different from the *Jews* and Heathen; and they were to wait together at *Jeruſalem* until they received Power from on high, before they were to go to gather the Churches: And this was according to the Wiſdom of God; Which if the *Jews* now had ſpoken to them that they ſhould not meet, do you think the Diſciples would have obeyed them, or the command of Chriſt? And when the Apoſtles had gathered Churches out of the *Jews* and the *Gentiles*, and ſetled them, to whom they wrote their Epiſtles, and builded up one another in the holy Faith, and not to forſake the aſſembling of themſelves together: For if we ſin wilfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, then conſider what is to be looked for: [So now mark] if the *Jews* or the Heathen, out of whom the *Hebrews*, the *Galatians*, the *Coloſſians*, the *Theſſalonians* and the *Corinthians*, were gathered into ſeveral Churches; if the Heathen and *Jews* had made Laws againſt them, that they ſhould not meet ſaving four, do you think they would have obeyed it? Therefore conſider of theſe things, and do as you would be done by, that is the Law and the Prophets: Did not many ſuffer in the ten perſecutions for meeting together, in the ſpace about 650. years, before there was a Pope? And hath not many ſuffered for meeting together, by

the *Papists* since; & look through the Book of Martyrs, how they suffered by the *Papists*, and called them *Conventicles*; and also in the time of the Martyrs sufferings in the ten Persecutions, and since the ten Persecutions, did they not make Laws they should not meet? And did they not call them *Conventicles*? And yet did they not meet in Barns or Houses, Woods and Fields? as you may read in the Book of Martyrs? Was these Martyrs disobedient in the ten Persecutions, and since to the Papists, in which so many thousands suffered for meeting together, for not paying Tythes, and for not swearing, and not yeilding to their principles and practice that persecuted them: Was it evil in them that persecuted them? And is it good now in you that make us to suffer for the same things? So are the Martyrs, and Persecutors, and you one, or the Martyrs and we one, who have suffered all along? Whether they have not the nature of the Heathen that make to suffer, and not the nature of the Apostles? Likewise, have not many suffered here, as we now, for meeting together, and not swearing, now in these dayes? As consider, in *Oliver's* dayes above three thousand suffered imprisonment, and some to death, who suffered for not swearing, and for Conscience-sake, as many of the Martyrs in the time of the ten Persecutions did, and by the Papists, and as we do now.

Therefore consider these things, for it is Christ Command that we do obey, and the Apostles Doctrine, which saith, *Swear not at all*: Consider now, Would not they in the ten Persecutions, and the *Papists*, have punish'd Christ for preaching this Doctrine, and made him to suffer, (as we do now that own it) which saith, *Swear not at all*, but let your *yea* be *yea*, and your *nay*, *nay*, &c. and the Apostles for holding it forth; for we do not these things in contempt or rebellion to any man, for our love and tenderness is, that all Magistrates and People would live in God's fear, and receive his Wisdom, by which all things were made and created, that by that they might be ordered to God's glory, and order that which God hath given them under their hands, to his honor, that to God they may be a blessing in their generation.

And consider, *Daniel* and the three children met, and disobeyed the King's command; and *Mordecai*, who would not

bow, disobeyed the Kings command; and the Midwives disobeyed *Pharoah's* command for not putting the Children to death: And the Woman who had seven sons which suffered by the Kings Law, because they would not eat Swines flesh, and one of her sons spake to his Mother, *I will not obey the Kings command, I will obey the Law of Moses, which our fore-fathers obeyed.* And *Daniel* disobeyed *Darius* his command, which was, that *Daniel* should not pray; and he prayed, and did not obey his command. And the Apostles disobeyed the High Priests and Counsels command, when they charged them that they should speak no more in that Name: Yet in the thing that is good, just and righteous, the righteous always have been, and are ever subject to every Ordinance of man for the Lord's sake, to such as were for the punishment of evil-doers, and for the praise of them that do well, that they might live a godly and peaceable life, [Mark] a peaceable life; for this cause they both prayed and paid tribute, not that they should bring them into an ungodly life, and an unpeaceable life, but that they should punish the evil-doers, that went into an ungodly life and unpeaceable; for to that end were the higher Powers ordained over the ungodly, that went into the ungodly and unpeaceable life; for the ungodly are unpeaceable, and this is for the praise of them that do well: For the Law was made for transgressors, and not for the righteous. So they that be in the higher power, are to distinguish the precious from the vile; for not doing so, the Prophets often cryed against them; and when they turned against the righteous, peaceable and godly, then is the saying known which the Scripture speaks of, *What shall separate us from the love of God? Shall Principalities, or Powers, or Thrones, or Dominions?* Shewing, that there are Principalities and Powers that would separate from the love of God which they had in Christ Jesus, and that is from a godly and peaceable life; and so there is a distinction, to be subject to that which punisheth the evil, and there is a suffering by that which would separate from the love of God: Now that which would separate, turns the Sword backwards against the righteous, and persecutors were alwayes blind, and could never see, but run upon their friends instead of their foes: And therefore these things consider and distinguish. God let *Adam* have liberty in

the earth, into which he was driven when he disobeyed his command; and God let *Cain* have liberty in the earth, after he had killed his Brother about Religion; and God let wild *Ishmael* have liberty in the Wilderness, after he was put out of *Abrahams* Family, the Father of the faithful; and the Serpent he had his liberty to feed upon the dust of the earth. Now I say, consider who are they who would not have Christ the just to live upon the earth; were not they them that Christ called Serpents, the *Jews*, the great professors? It was not Gods mind that people should be put out of the earth: God let *Adam* and *Eve* have liberty in the earth, after they had transgressed, though they were not to have liberty in the Garden. And *Ishmael*, though he had not liberty in *Abrahams* Family, yet he had liberty in the Wilderness: And *Cain*, though he had not liberty in the presence of God, yet he had liberty to be a wanderer in the Land of *Nod*. Therefore consider what mind that is that would not let men have liberty in the Earth, though he be not of your Assembly, yet he should have liberty in the Earth. Therefore consider whether that be the mind of God, or against it, yea or nay, though the Just comes over all these things, and are redeemed from the earth.

And if we must not meet together, how must we stir up one another, and Edifye one another, and provoke one another unto love and to good works, if we must not meet together to speak one to another. Consider this with understanding.

The world saith, *Kiss the Book*: The Book saith, *Kiss the Son lest he be angry*: And the Son saith, *Swear not at all*, but keep to *yea* and *nay in all your communications; for whatsoever is more than this, comes of evil.*

The World saith, *Lay your hand on the Book*; the Book saith, *Handle the Word*, and the Word saith, *Handle not the traditions, inventions, nor the rudiments of the world*; and, *This is my beloved Son, hear ye him, saith God*, who is the Life, and the Truth, and the Light, and the Way to God, who saith, *Swear not at all.*

Therefore cumber not the ground you Adulterers, cumber not the earth you drunkards, cumber not the ground you swearers, cumber not the ground you proud, vain persons; cumber not the Earth you Earthworms, covetous persons; cumber not the ground you oppressors and exactors, and grin-

ders

ders of the poor, cumber not the ground; thou perſecutor of the children of the Moſt High; cumber not the ground ye rich Gluttons, cumber not the earth you idle perſons, that live in fulneſs of pleaſures, and abundance of idleneſs, as the ſtalled Ox, ſo as he lieth in the mire and dirt; and as the full-fed horſe, that muſt be breathed, with pleaſures and ſports, and your games of all ſorts, and call it recreation for your idleneſs out of the ſervice of the Lord; for thou who art ſo full, thou needeſt not work thy ſelf down by pleaſures, nor go to pleaſures to get thee a ſtomach; if thou wilt work it down with labour, work and chaſtity keeps all ſweet, and labouring in the fear of the Lord.

Cain the firſt birth, a perſecutor; the firſt birth, a falſe worſhipper; and *Cain* the firſt birth, that falſe worſhipper, turned, and turneth againſt *Abel*; and *Cain* the firſt birth, out of his ſtock came up the falſe-worſhipper, who was the Inventer of *Harps* and *Organs*.

Nimrods ſtock, falſe Worſhippers, and out of *Ham's* ſtock he came, whoſe Spirit was not covered with truth, but with that which was from the truth; and ſo that ſpirit which runs from the truth, is not like *Shem* nor *Japhet*, and ſuch worſhip not God in the ſpirit.

And they of the old World, that went from the Spirit of the Lord, and grieved his Spirit, they could not worſhip God in the Spirit.

And the *Philiſtines* grieved the Spirit of the Lord, and they were the perſecutors, and they turned againſt the juſt.

And the *Sodomites* were the perſecutors of the Juſt; and the *Sodomites* were ſuch as lived in abundance of idleneſs and fulneſs; and thoſe that were idle and full, perſecuted the righteous and the juſt, and the true Worſhippers, and they that did, and do ſo, are the falſe Worſhippers.

And *Iſhmael* and his ſtock, the firſt birth, who ſcoffed at the juſt, and turneth againſt the juſt, a perſecutor; and ſo are all wild men now.

And *Eſau* the firſt birth, the prophane perſon, a falſe Worſhipper, a perſecutor of *Jacob*; as many *Eſau's* now, perſecute them whom God loveth, who hate the firſt birth { being perſecutors, prophane, falſe worſhippers } whom God loveth not.

And

And the *Ægyptians* were, and are persecutors, and of the first birth.

And *Balaam* was a persecutor of the Just, and *Balaam* loved the Wages of unrighteousness; and such *Balaams* are now the lovers of the Wages of unrighteousness, and the persecutors.

And the *Jews* that professed the Law, the Words of God, and did live out of the life of the Law of God; such did and do persecute the just; and such professors were always, and now are persecutors.

And alwayes such as preached for hire, and divined for money, and taught for filthy lucre, and such Shepherds, Bishops and Priests that taught for the Fleece and the Wool, and for handfuls of Barley, and for pieces of bread, and were covetous; such were, and are persecutors and false Worshippers, and persecutors of the just, and the true Worshippers of God in the Spirit; and they that did so, grieved it.

And the Scribes, Pharisees and chief Priests, that had the Prophets and the Saints Words, and were not in the life of the Law and the Prophets, and Saints, and yet did profess their words, such did, and do persecute the Just, them that be in the life of the Saints.

And also, likewise all Christians that do profess the *Prophets* and Christ, and the Apostles, and *Moses*, and the Saints Words, and be out of their life and spirit, are the false Worshippers, and are the persecutors of the Just, and that is the end of all the profession without the life and the Spirit of God that the Saints dwell and walk in, who are the true Worshippers of God in the Spirit and Truth; and such as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God; and the false Worshippers are such as grieve the Spirit of God, and yet wil get the Saints words, and the sheeps cloathing, and not live in their life.

The first birth liveth in the Kingdom of the World, in *strife*, a *Persecutor*: The *first birth* is a *Birth* of *strife*, & the second birth is heir of the Kingdom of the Lord; and the fruits of this birth is love, *&c.* Therefore come out of the first birth, to the second.

Cain, Ham, Nimrod, Ishmael, Esau, Balaam, Sodomites, Philistins, Pharisees, Chief Priests, Babylon, were not these envious, wild, pro-

prophane, idle, covetous, oppressors, persecutors, false worshippers; and so you that be of the same nature, and of the same Birth, Was it not, and is it not the first birth? If it be so, know your own Kindred, and come out of this Kindred.

Scoffers, Scorners, Mockers, Reproachers, Revilers, Brawlers, Railers, envious men, Do you profess God and Christ? These be all evil weeds, and cumbers God's ground. The *Babylonites* were, &c. are persecutors of the Just, and the true Worshippers of God; and the *Babylonites* build up, and throw down, who be out of the standing Power, Life and Spirit of God, which the Apostles and we are in; and so are not upon the Rock Christ Jesus, upon which we are, that changeth not.

G. F.

THE END.